



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Eastern Federal Lands
Highway Division

21400 Ridgetop Circle
Sterling, VA 20166-6511

DEC - 8 2008

In Reply Refer to: HFPP-15

Subject: Section 4(f) Evaluation of the Transportation Elements of the Proposed Consolidation of the Department of Homeland Security Headquarters at the St. Elizabeths West Campus, Washington, DC

Dear Interested Party:

The Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has prepared an evaluation for the transportation elements of the referenced undertaking that are subject to Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act of 1966.

The FHWA is a cooperating agency with the General Services Administration (GSA), lead federal agency, for the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement for the redevelopment of St. Elizabeths in Southeast Washington, District of Columbia, to house the consolidation of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Headquarters. The project proposes a modification to the Interstate 295-Malcolm X Avenue interchange. The FHWA has approval responsibility for the proposed interchange modification because of its impact on the Interstate. In addition, at this time it is anticipated that funding for the interchange modification is likely to come from USDOT appropriations. The FHWA's approval responsibility for modifications to the Interstate and oversight responsibility for the potential use of USDOT funds for the modification both initiate a responsibility to consider the application of Section 4(f).

Modification of the Interstate 295-Malcolm X Avenue interchange proposes to use land from the National Park Service's Shepherd Parkway. The FHWA has determined that the Shepherd Parkway property is a 4(f) property because it is a publicly-owned park (originally planned as a parkway; however, the parkway was never constructed). In addition, GSA is proposing the construction of a road to provide access to the St. Elizabeths West Campus that would run from Malcolm X Avenue at the Interstate 295 interchange to Firth-Sterling Avenue. The access road would be aligned parallel with and adjacent to Interstate 295. The proposed access road is also subject to Section 4(f) requirements because it would also require taking land from Shepherd Parkway as well as run through a portion of the St. Elizabeths West Campus. This determination is based on the following:

- 1) The location of the access road's intersection with Malcolm X is driven by the location and configuration of the Interstate 295 interchange.
- 2) Because the interchange modification is subject to FHWA approval, the access road becomes a related action whose potential use of 4(f) property is therefore related and connected to FHWA's interchange approval action.
- 3) The current alignment of the access road proposes the use of 4(f) land along the Shepherd Parkway and the St. Elizabeth's West Campus for transportation purposes.

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FHWA invites you to furnish email and written comments on the Section 4(f) Evaluation by January 23, 2009 to:

Jack Van Dop
Senior Technical Specialist
Federal Highway Administration
21400 Ridgetop Circle
Sterling, VA 20166
Email address: jack.j.vandop@fhwa.dot.gov

The Section 4(f) Evaluation is available at www.stelizabethswestcampus.com and www.efl.fhwa.dot.gov/projects-environment.aspx. Hard copies of the document are available for viewing at the following locations:

Anacostia Neighborhood Library
1800 Good Hope Road, S.E.
at 18th Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20020

Washington Highlands Neighborhood
Library
115 Atlantic Street, S.W.
at South Capitol Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20032

Francis A. Gregory
3660 Alabama Avenue, S.E.
at 37th Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20020

UPO/Ralph Waldo "Petey" Greene
Community Service Center
2907 Martin Luther King, Jr., Ave., S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20032

Parkland-Turner Community Library
1700 Alabama Avenue, S.E.
at Stanton Road, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20020

National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street, N.W.
North Lobby, Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20004

ANC 8C
3125 MLK Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20020

Federal Highway Administration
21400 Ridgetop Circle
Sterling, VA 20166

Please contact Mr. Jack Van Dop at 703-404-6282 or at jack.j.vandop@fhwa.dot.gov, if you have any questions regarding this notification.

Sincerely yours,



Melisa L. Ridenour, P.E.
Division Engineer

SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

Department of Homeland Security Headquarters Consolidation at St. Elizabeths, Washington, DC Malcolm X/I-295 Interchange Modifications and Access Road to the West Campus

**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division**

December 4, 2008

1. Introduction

This Section 4(f) Evaluation by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) addresses the application of Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended, to modifications proposed by the General Services Administration (GSA) to the Malcolm X Avenue/I-295 Interchange (the Interchange) and the related proposed construction of an access road from the Interchange to Firth Sterling Avenue (to the north) and providing access into the St. Elizabeths West Campus (hereinafter referred to as the access road) to accommodate the proposed consolidation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Headquarters on that site.

The FHWA has no involvement in or decisionmaking authority over the decision to consolidate the DHS Headquarters, nor does the FHWA have involvement in or authority over the choice of location by GSA for that consolidation. The mode of transportation access of occupants to and from the Consolidated Headquarters is a GSA and DHS determination. The FHWA's involvement is strictly in the proposed modification of the Interchange and the proposed construction of the access road. The FHWA's authority is based upon its approval authority in Title 23 of the United States Code for any modifications to the Interstate System, and on its responsibility under the law commonly referred to as Section 4(f).

Section 4(f) refers to Section 4(f) of the U. S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended, and as codified at Title 49, United States Code, Section 303, and at Title 23, United States Code, Section 138. Section 4(f) provides protection in the selection of road sites for publicly owned parks, recreation areas, or wildlife and/or waterfowl refuges of national, state or local significance or land of an historic site of national, state, or local significance. Section 4(f) also applies to archaeological sites on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and which warrant preservation in place.

Specifically, Section 4(f) states that the Secretary of Transportation (as delegated to the Federal Highway Administration under Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.48(b)(1)) may not approve the use of publicly owned land of a publicly owned park; recreation area; wildlife

and waterfowl refuge of national, state or local significance; or land of a historic site of national, state or local significance unless a determination is made that:

- a) There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the land from the property; and
- b) The action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use.

Further regulatory guidance for actions under Section 4(f) appears at Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 771.135.

The proposed actions - modification of the Interchange and construction of an access road - would impact 4(f) property under the administration of the National Park Service (NPS) - land known as Shepherd Parkway - and the West Campus of St. Elizabeths under the administration of the GSA. The West Campus of St. Elizabeths has been designated a National Historic Landmark. The Shepherd Parkway is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service and consists of the remnants of land from what was envisioned to be a parkway system joining forts constructed during the Civil War which ring Washington, DC. Alternately called the Forts Drive and Fort Circle Parks, this proposal was endorsed by the McMillan Commission Plan of 1902, and recommended by planning agencies for several decades after; however the parkway itself was never constructed. Part of the land set aside for the planned parkway was used to construct I-295, which parallels the proposed location of the access road. Shepherd Parkway is approximately 360 feet wide at its narrowest point where the interchange modification and access road are proposed to be built, and serves primarily as a green space. In order to minimize land taking and other impacts on the 4(f) properties, use of retaining walls in the roadway design will be considered due to the fact that the land is steeply sloped.

2. Description of the Proposed Action by GSA

The GSA has proposed redevelopment of the West Campus of St. Elizabeths in Southeast Washington, DC to house the consolidated headquarters of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in accordance with the Department of Homeland Security National Capital Region Housing Master Plan and its mission requirements (see Figure 1). To support this redevelopment, GSA has proposed improvements to the local roadway network including modification of the Malcolm X/I-295 interchange and construction of a new access road from the Interchange to Firth Sterling Avenue to the north. This proposed access road would pass through, and provide access to the St. Elizabeths West Campus. It would also pass through a portion of the Shepherd Parkway. Modification of the Malcolm X/I-295 interchange is subject to FHWA approval by authority of law because it affects access to and from an Interstate road (Title 23, United States Code, Section 103(c)(3)). The modifications are proposed to include the addition of new ramps and the removal of existing ramps. The access road through Shepherd Parkway and the St. Elizabeths West Campus is included in the scope of FHWA responsibilities because construction of the access road is interdependent with the operation and modifications to the Malcolm X/I-295 Interchange.

2.a. Project Background and History

In 2002, the United States Congress passed the Homeland Security Act of 2002, which created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Since that time, the various components that make up the DHS have been spread throughout the National Capital Region (NCR) in over 70 separate facilities. In recent years Congress has expressed concern about the DHS being spread across the NCR. The DHS, in conjunction with the GSA, has found a location within the NCR that would accommodate the consolidation of its headquarters component of the St. Elizabeths West Campus. St. Elizabeths was built and controlled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and its predecessors, from 1852. In 1987, HHS transferred administration of the St. Elizabeths East Campus to the District of Columbia. In 2004, HHS transferred administration of the West Campus to GSA. Current access to the St. Elizabeths West Campus is via two entrances from Martin Luther King (MLK) Avenue which runs between the East and West Campuses. The GSA has developed alternatives to improve access to the St. Elizabeths West Campus. The roadway improvements will relieve congestion on MLK Avenue and provide additional access points to the proposed DHS headquarters.

2.b. Project Purpose and Need

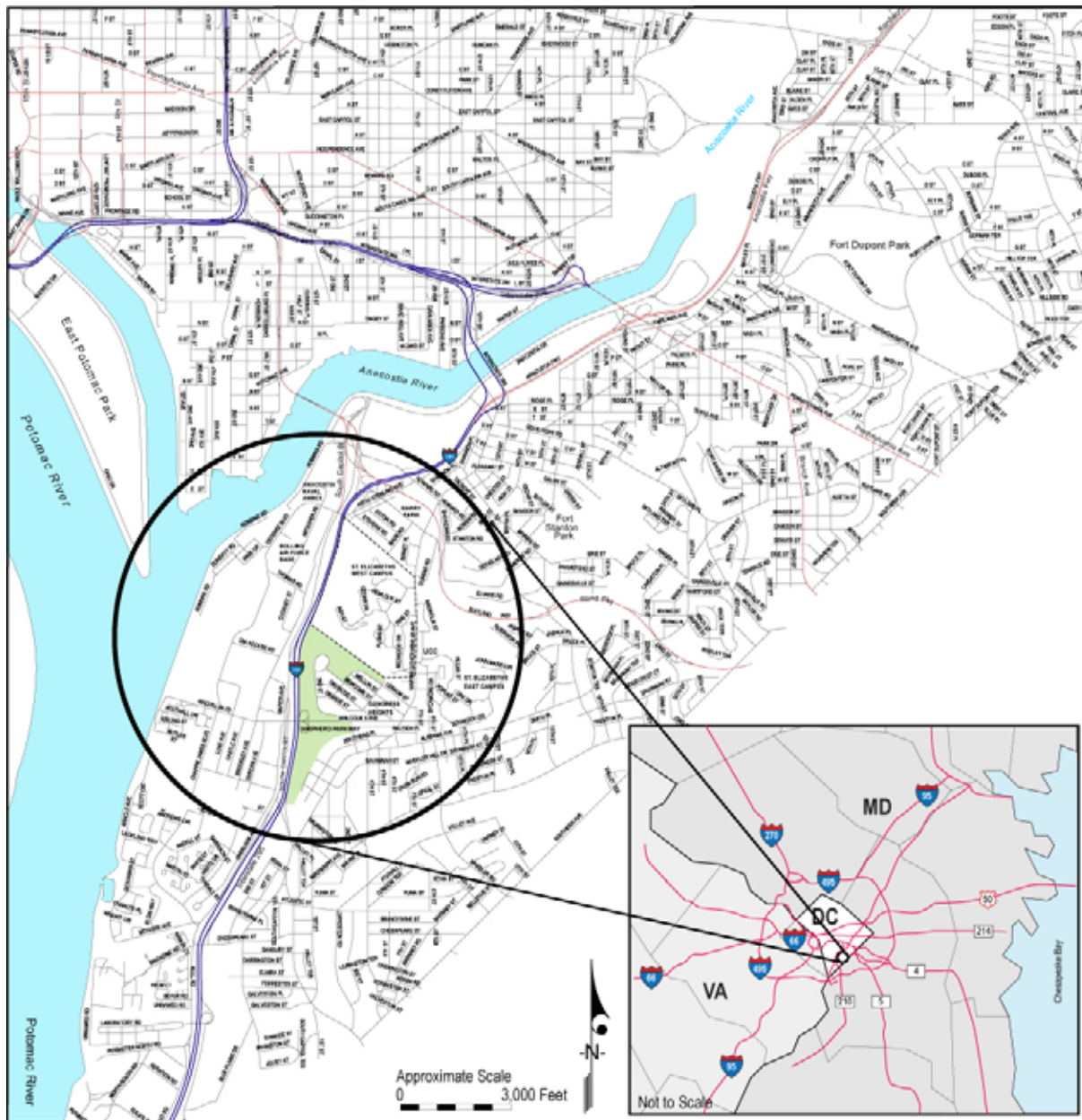
The purpose and need for the Project is to house the DHS Headquarters in a centralized, secure location in order to facilitate efficient operations between the DHS Departments. It is the FHWA's understanding that the GSA has determined that the only reasonable location for meeting the DHS space and security needs are alternatives involving the redevelopment of St. Elizabeths West Campus.

The proposed transportation improvements are needed to support the proposed consolidation of the DHS Headquarters. Even without the consolidation of the DHS Headquarters at the St. Elizabeths West Campus, current roadway infrastructure is not adequate to accommodate increased traffic demands anticipated from development projects in the Anacostia area, including at Bolling Air Force Base and Barry Farm. Multiple intersections, including the I-295/Malcolm X Interchange, are expected to operate under failing conditions by the years 2013 and 2015 (See DHS Headquarters at St. Elizabeths West Campus Final Environmental Impact Statement Volume II for further discussion on traffic and transportation).

The consolidation of DHS Headquarters at St. Elizabeths West Campus will add 4,234 additional vehicles to local roadways. Overall traffic volume from future planned projects (including redevelopment of the St. Elizabeths West Campus) will increase 30 percent on I-295 (from 80,000 vehicles per day in 2002 to 105,800 vehicles per day in 2030); 90 percent on South Capitol Street (from 16,300 vehicles per day in 2002 to 30,600 vehicles per day in 2030); and 90 percent on Malcolm X Avenue (from 14,500 vehicles per day in 2002 to 28,000 vehicles per day in 2030). Without roadway improvements, these new traffic conditions would increase congestion and delays in the Anacostia region, which could lead to unsafe driving conditions and more accidents.

Currently, access to the St. Elizabeths West Campus is provided by two gates accessed from MLK Avenue and a tunnel located below MLK Avenue that connects the St. Elizabeths West Campus to the St. Elizabeths East Campus. These existing gates cannot accommodate the arrivals and departures of the anticipated traffic that would be accessing the St. Elizabeths West Campus during morning and afternoon peak traffic periods after the consolidation of the DHS Headquarters. In addition, MLK Avenue cannot safely accommodate the volume of traffic that would be generated by the proposed redevelopment of St. Elizabeths West Campus; nor can existing interchanges and local roadways satisfactorily accommodate design year demands without improvement, even without the redevelopment of St. Elizabeths West Campus. Finally, the current cloverleaf configuration of the I-295/Malcolm X Interchange is considered deficient in design, based on current safety standards and on its efficiency in handling current and projected traffic.

With the proposed consolidation of the DHS Headquarters, there are security considerations in the expeditious movement of DHS employees in and out of their headquarters location - particularly in times of emergency. In addition, there would be a need to reduce traffic congestion around and improve access to the St. Elizabeths West Campus in order to accommodate the large number of additional vehicles; which, in turn, would improve safety for all users of the roadway system.



Source: Government of the District of Columbia, Office of Planning.

Figure 1. Regional Location Map

2.c. Description of Section 4(f) Resources Affected by the Proposed Action

Under Section 4(f), public parks, recreation areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges are considered Section 4(f) resources if all of the following conditions are met:

- a) The resource is publicly owned;
- b) It is a public park, recreation area or wildlife and waterfowl refuge;
- c) The major purpose of the resource is for recreation activities or wildlife and waterfowl refuge (incidental, secondary, occasional, or dispersed activities are not considered); and
- d) The resource has significance (as determined by the officials having jurisdiction over the resource)

Historic and archeological properties that warrant preservation in place and that are either listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are also considered Section 4(f) resources.

The Shepherd Parkway, a public park and historic site, and St. Elizabeths West Campus, a National Historic Landmark, meet the criteria for protection under Section 4(f) and would be affected by the proposed action (see Figures 2 and 3).

2.c.1. Shepherd Parkway (NR Listed)

The Shepherd Parkway is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service and is part of the Fort Circle Parks - a series of parklands which contain Civil War earthworks (see Figure 4). Shepherd Parkway consists of the remnants of land from what was envisioned to be a parkway system joining sites containing the remains of forts which were constructed to provide a ring of protection to Washington, DC during the Civil War. Alternately called the Forts Drive and Fort Circle Parks, this proposal was endorsed by the McMillan (Senate Park) Commission Plan of 1902, and recommended by planning agencies for several decades thereafter; however the parkway itself was never constructed. Part of the land set aside for the planned parkway was used to construct I-295.

Today the Shepherd Parkway park extends from the St. Elizabeths West Campus on the north end to Irving Street, SE on the south end. The Park consists of approximately 205.5 acres designated Reservation 421 and administered by National Capital Parks-East of the National Capital Region of the National Park Service. Shepherd Parkway contains the remains of two Civil War fortifications, Fort Carroll and Fort Greble. These remains are outside of the study area for the Malcolm X/I-295 interchange improvements and the proposed St. Elizabeths West Campus access road, and would not be affected by the proposed action. Shepherd Parkway is a woodland park that also includes some picnic facilities. The park contains mature native hardwood forest, unique geologic features, and a bald eagle nest. Within the study area, there are

no recreational amenities or trails and no designated vehicular or pedestrian entrance into the park.

In 2004, the NPS completed a General Management Plan that envisioned constructing a new 23-mile trail to link most of the Fort sites and to connect the green corridor of the Fort Circle Parks system, including the Shepherd Parkway (the route for the trail is shown in a conceptual format in the Management Plan - see Figure 4); but it has not been constructed. According to the Management Plan, within the Shepherd Parkway area, the trail would go primarily along city sidewalks to avert the impacts of a new trail in narrow wooded corridors and to avoid important wildlife habitat. The conceptual route for the trail system is shown passing by the St. Elizabeths East Campus, crossing MLK Avenue, and continuing through the Shepherd Parkway along the south side of the St. Elizabeths West Campus (see Figure 5).

In addition to the proposed trail, the General Management Plan calls for preservation and maintenance of the greenbelt around the City for its natural, cultural, and scenic values (NPS, 2004). The DC Comprehensive Land Use Plan Element calls for the Park to remain as open space. It also calls for the prevention of District and Federal actions that would harm historic and ecological resources in the Park.

Shepherd Parkway is part of the Civil War Fort Sites and Fort Circle Park System, which was listed in the DC Inventory of Historic sites on November 8, 1964. Fort Circle Parks was added to the National Register on July 15, 1974, and its documentation was revised on September 13, 1978. According to the National Park Service, the agency with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resource, there are four statements which define the significance of the Fort Circle Parks' resources:

- The Park site contains the remains of the defense sites (e.g. forts, batteries, rifle trenches) that effectively deterred the invasion of the Nation's Capital during the Civil War.
- b) The Fort Circle Parks include the remains of forts that were engaged in the Battle of Fort Stevens in July 1864 – the only Civil War battle in the District of Columbia and the only time a sitting U.S. president has come under enemy fire in warfare.
- c) The pattern (greenbelt) of public space of Fort Circle Parks represents an element of one of the earliest urban planning efforts for public recreation in the United States (as first suggested in the 1902 *McMillan Commission Report* and the 1926-1927 *National Capital Planning Commission Plan*). Today it enhances the aesthetics of the nation's capital and the quality of life for its citizens.
- d) The Fort Circle Parks preserve significant natural features, including substantial acreage of mature native hardwood forest, geologic and aquatic resources, and a diversity of important habitat for indigenous flora and fauna that are unusual in an urban setting and that contribute to the uniqueness of the nation's capital.

Within the project study area, the Shepherd Parkway contributes to significance under statements c) and d) above.

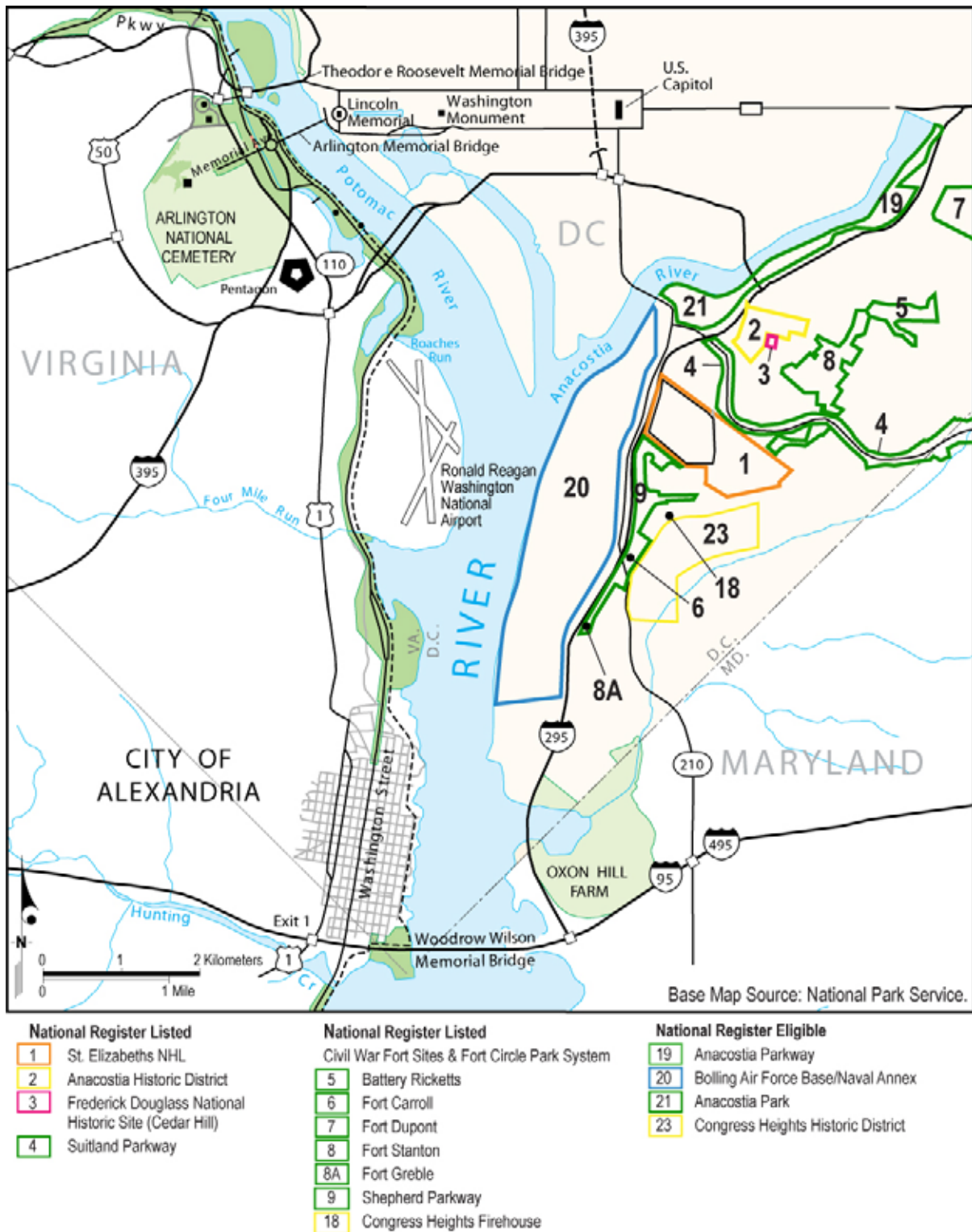


Figure 2. Section 4(f) Resources



Figure 3. Section 4(f) Resources Study Area

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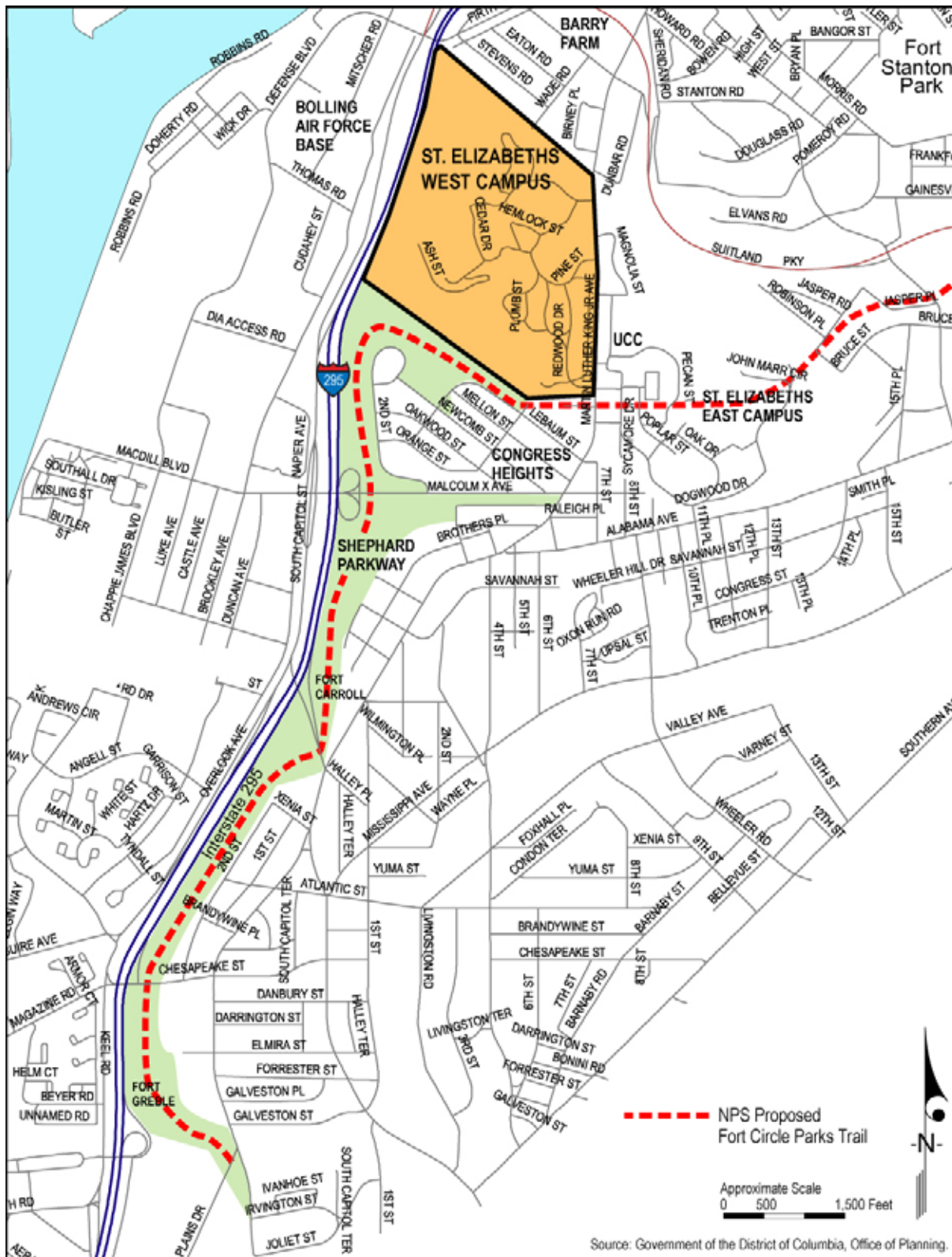


Figure 5. Shepherd Parkway and Proposed Fort Circle Parks Trail within the Study Area

There are no standing historic structures within the portion of the Shepherd Parkway affected by the proposed action. The Parkway land forms part of the topographic bowl in which Washington, DC is located. The Parks, Open Space, and Natural Features Element of the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital includes preservation and maintenance policies including the need to control the natural skyline in the Anacostia hills portion of the topographic bowl, protect and enhance the shorelines of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, and conserve trees and other vegetation in the landscaped buffer areas of Federal installations in a natural condition. The NPS has assessed the Shepherd Parkway as having a high potential for unrecorded Civil War defensive works, magazines, and signal stations, and prehistoric Native American archeological sites.

2.c.2. St. Elizabeths West Campus (National Historic Landmark)

The St. Elizabeths National Historic Landmark is located on Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Avenue in Southeast Washington, DC.). St. Elizabeths was constructed starting in 1852 as a model hospital for the mentally ill. St. Elizabeths Hospital (both the East and West Campuses) was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on April 26, 1979. On March 7, 1991, the Secretary of the Interior designated the entire hospital a National Historic Landmark (NHL). The NHL designation covers 82 contributing resources including buildings, landscapes, vistas of the river and city, and the St. Elizabeths West Campus Cemetery. Both campuses of the hospital were also listed in the District of Columbia's Inventory of Historic Sites on May 26, 2005.

The West Campus is owned by the Federal government and is under control of GSA. The East Campus is under the custody and control of the District of Columbia. The study area for the relevant transportation improvements contains a sliver of undeveloped land along the west edge of the West Campus paralleling I-295. The predominantly deciduous forest land within this area does not contain any recreational amenities or designated public access. The area of the West Campus NHL is 176 acres and the East Campus NHL is approximately 173 acres.

3. Consideration of whether there is a Feasible and Prudent Alternative to Use of the Identified 4(f) Resources

3.a. Avoidance Alternative

In accordance with Section 4(f), consideration must first be given to whether there is a feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the protected 4(f) property. The only alternative that would totally avoid Section 4(f) resources would be a No Build (transportation) Alternative. The No Build (transportation) Alternative assumes DHS Headquarters is constructed on the St. Elizabeths West Campus and additional traffic is generated by the site development, but that no transportation improvements are to be undertaken to improve access to the St. Elizabeths West Campus. The No Build (transportation) Alternative does not fulfill the needs of the project because it does not address traffic congestion, and requires facility access through areas controlled by others. Therefore, it does not provide for efficient or safe access in and out of the DHS Headquarters in an emergency, and therefore is not considered to be a feasible and prudent alternative.

3.b. Alternatives to Minimize or Avoid Impacts to 4(f) Properties

The following alternatives were discussed in the DHS Headquarters at St. Elizabeths West Campus Final Environmental Impact Statement Volume II because they would have a limited impact on Section 4(f) resources (see Figure 6). Additional information and descriptions of alternatives has been documented in GSA's Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for DHS Headquarters Consolidation at St. Elizabeths in Southeast, Washington, D.C. Information from the FEIS has been reviewed and utilized to support determinations in this evaluation.

A. Access from South Capitol Street

South Capitol Street is located adjacent and parallel to and west of I-295. Alternatives to create a direct access from South Capitol Street to the St. Elizabeths West Campus were studied. South Capitol Street and the St. Elizabeths West Campus are separated by I-295; therefore it would be necessary to provide fly-over ramps to South Capitol Street or a tunnel under I-295 to create a direct access point with South Capitol Street. A fly-over over I-295 would require at least 15 feet of vertical clearance. Ramping up the road from South Capitol Street to this height would require unreasonable grades in excess of 18% because there is not enough horizontal distance between South Capitol Street and I-295. Tunneling under I-295 would present similar engineering issues. Because there is insufficient space to allow for a reasonable grade for a flyover or a tunnel, direct access from South Capitol Street to the St. Elizabeths West Campus is not feasible. Therefore, the FHWA determines that this alternative is not a feasible and prudent alternative.

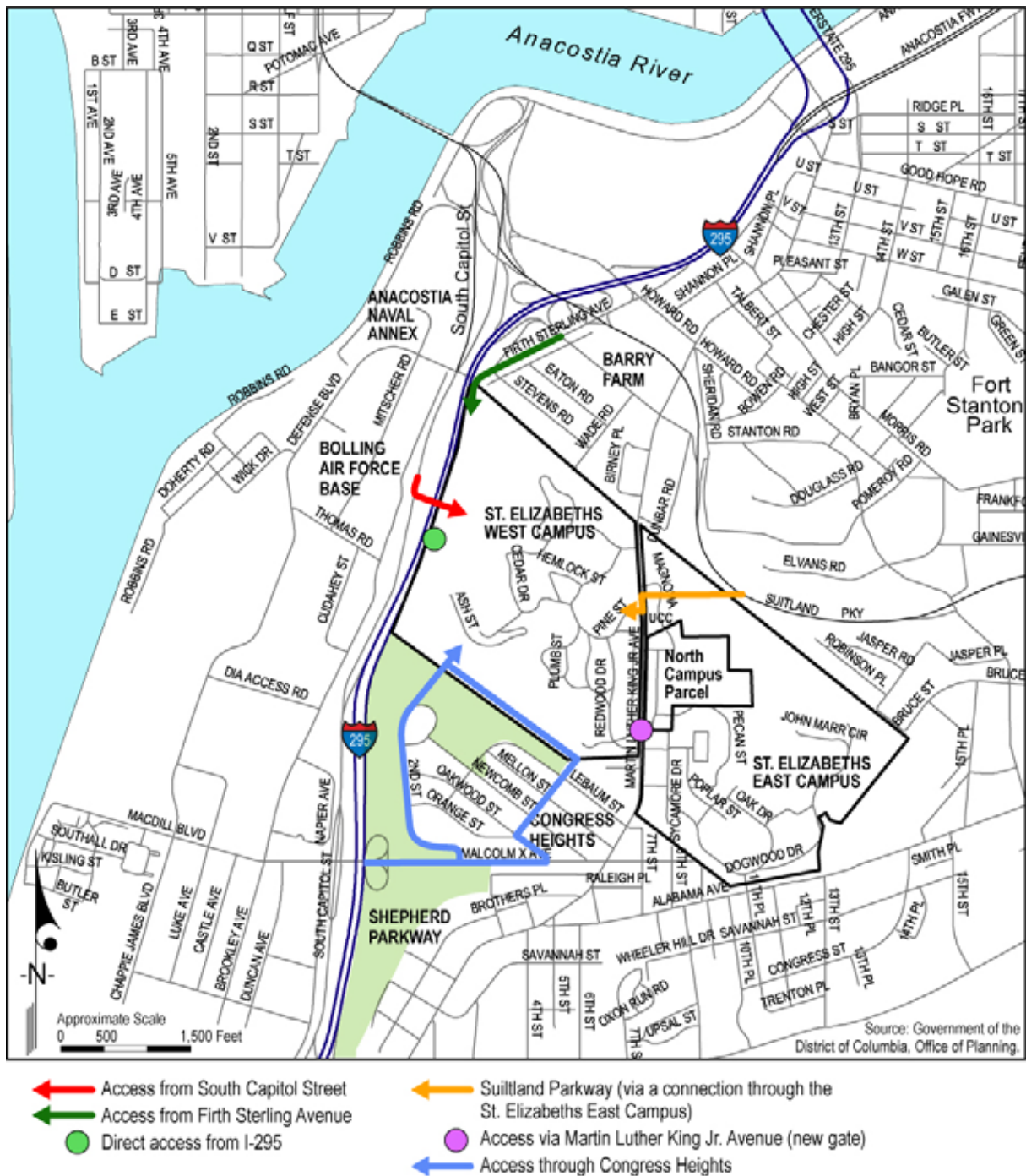


Figure 6. Alternatives Considered and Dismissed

B. Access from Firth Sterling Avenue

Firth Sterling Avenue is located to the north of the St. Elizabeths West Campus and connects to the Suitland Parkway, Howard Road, and I-295. Construction of a new entrance road from Firth Sterling Avenue would provide direct access from this artery into the campus. As currently planned, Firth Sterling Avenue could accommodate approximately 30 percent of the projected traffic accessing the St. Elizabeths West Campus. Modeling for the access to the St. Elizabeths West Campus without a new interchange on I-295 indicates that an additional 40 percent of the traffic accessing the campus would need to utilize the Firth Sterling Avenue entrance. However, without major improvements a single access point at Firth Sterling Avenue would not provide adequate capacity to handle the traffic generated by the DHS Headquarters. This single point access would create queuing problems on Firth Sterling Avenue from vehicles waiting to clear security checkpoints on the campus. In addition, without additional access points, the volume of traffic created by the DHS Headquarters would cause intersections at Firth Sterling Avenue to fail. In order to provide adequate levels of service, the I-295 and Suitland Parkway interchange with Howard Road and Firth Sterling Avenue would need to be reconstructed which could impact the Anacostia Metrorail station and the Suitland Parkway, which is itself a Section 4(f) resource. In addition, Firth Sterling Avenue would need to be widened resulting in the acquisition of businesses including a Verizon facility and acquisition of portions of the Barry Farm public housing complex. As a stand-alone alternative, access from Firth Sterling Avenue does not fulfill the project needs. It would not relieve traffic congestion, would not suffice as the main access to the site, or enhance safety at the other roadways. Therefore, the FHWA determines that this alternative is not a feasible and prudent alternative.

C. Direct Access from I-295

This alternative would provide for a new direct access between the St. Elizabeths West Campus and I-295. A design waiver from FHWA would be required for a new access point on I-295 due to the close proximity of the I-295/Suitland Parkway interchange to the north and the I-295/Malcolm X Avenue interchange to the south. The addition of a new interchange on I-295 to the St. Elizabeths campus between the existing interchanges would create weave problems on I-295. Approaching from the north, this alternative would require a fly-over of the I-295 northbound lanes. This fly-over would require unreasonable grades in excess of 18%, as well as land and buildings from the Anacostia Naval Annex and Bolling Air Force Base, which is a National Register Eligible Historic District and a Section 4(f) resource. In addition, the Naval Annex does not have land available to relocate buildings that would be demolished under this alternative. Therefore, the FHWA has determined that this is not a feasible and prudent alternative.

D. Access from Suitland Parkway (via a connection to the St. Elizabeths East Campus)

Only 2 percent of the traffic accessing the St. Elizabeths West Campus would come from the Suitland Parkway. Therefore, creating a direct connection to Suitland Parkway would not address the access needs for the majority of additional traffic. Access to St. Elizabeths East Campus from Suitland Parkway is feasible via a long and relatively steep fly-over ramp (trumpet interchange) from the parkway to the St. Elizabeths East Campus. Both the Suitland Parkway and the East Campus are Section 4(f) resources. Access between the East Campus and the West Campus would be provided via the existing at-grade gates on MLK Avenue or via a tunnel connection to the East Campus (similar to the existing tunnel connection). Adding St. Elizabeths West Campus traffic to MLK Avenue via at-grade crossings would not alleviate traffic congestion at the existing MLK Avenue gates. Providing a tunnel connection similar to the existing tunnel would create security problems for the new St. Elizabeths West Campus. Also, this alternative would not provide a connection to the western side of the St. Elizabeths West Campus close to potential parking locations, and therefore would require the widening of roadways within the St. Elizabeths National Historic Landmark to allow vehicles to traverse the site. This alternative would also require acquiring land and potential demolition of historic buildings on the East Campus. Due to the small volume of traffic that would be using this alternative, would not relieve traffic congestion, would not suffice as the main access to the site, or enhance safety at the other roadways, would not avoid 4(f) properties (Suitland Parkway and East and West Campus NHL). Therefore, the FHWA determines that this alternative is not a feasible and prudent alternative.

E. Access via MLK Avenue (new gate)

An additional gate on MLK Avenue would be added under this alternative. This option would have major impacts on local traffic since all employees, visitors, and deliveries coming to the DHS Headquarters would need to access the campus from MLK Avenue. A new access on MLK Avenue would not provide access to the western edge of the St. Elizabeths West Campus close to potential parking locations, and therefore would require the widening of roadways within the St. Elizabeths National Historic Landmark to allow vehicles to traverse the site. A new gate on MLK Avenue would not address evacuation concerns associated with having all site egress connections to one street. The limited distance between adjacent gates/intersections would not allow for efficient traffic operations. This alternative would require widening MLK Avenue which would require either removal of the historic wall surrounding the St. Elizabeths West Campus and the historic gate houses or impact buildings on the East Campus including the new District of Columbia Emergency Operations Center. As a standalone alternative, access from MLK Avenue does not completely fulfill the project needs. It would not relieve traffic congestion, would not suffice as the main access to the site, or enhance safety at the other roadways. Therefore, the FHWA determines that this alternative is not a prudent alternative.

F. Roadway through Congress Heights

Under this alternative, employees accessing St. Elizabeths from I-295 and Malcolm X Avenue would follow Malcolm X Avenue east approximately 1,300 feet and turn in a northeast direction onto 2nd or Oakwood Street SE and then 5th Street, S.E. Traffic would then travel through Congress Heights to the St. Elizabeth's West Campus. Upon entering the campus property from the Oakwood/5th Street SE alignment, a roadway would need to be constructed along the southwest edge of the property in order for vehicles to access the campus parking facilities. The 2nd Street S.E. alignment would require crossing the Shepherd Parkway and then enter the West Campus. Under this alternative, a left turn lane would need to be added on Malcolm X to provide access to Oakwood/5th and/or 2nd Street SE. (See Figure 6.) 5th Street SE and/or 2nd Street SE would need to be widened resulting in the demolition of single-family and multi-family dwellings in Congress Heights or widening of 2nd Street SE into Shepherd Parkway property. The population of Congress Heights is overwhelmingly low income and minority, and the acquisition and demolition of housing would have disproportionately high impacts on this community. Secondly, the 5th Street SE option of this alternative would enter the St. Elizabeth West Campus within 400 feet of the buffer zone established to protect the nesting bald eagles in Shepherd Parkway. As the alternative would extend along the southwest edge of the property within the St. Elizabeth West Campus, the alternative would require the removal of mature tree cover and be within the eagle buffer zone (within 200 feet of the actual nest). Therefore, this alternative, in fact, does not completely avoid the two Section 4(f) properties.

While this alternative is feasible, due to its takings within the Congress Heights neighborhood, environmental justice and natural environment impacts and the fact that it does not avoid taking land from Shepherd Parkway and the West Campus, it is not a prudent alternative. Furthermore, this alternative essentially moves the intersection of the access road and Malcolm X Avenue far enough away from the interstate interchange - which is subject to FHWA approval and triggers Section 4(f) - resulting in an access road that is no longer subject to FHWA approval and its 4(f) requirements (because the access road is no longer interdependent with the operation and modifications to the interstate interchange). This access road alternative would therefore impact and take the very resources that otherwise would be subject to evaluation and protection under Section 4(f). Construction of this alternative requires the use of land from Shepherd Parkway and the West Campus, and would result in disproportionally high and adverse impacts to the low-income, minority community of Congress Heights. Therefore, the FHWA determines that this alternative is not a prudent alternative.

3.c. Alternatives That Meet the Purpose and Need of the Proposed Project

Four alternatives that met the purpose and need of the proposed project were identified and analyzed in the DHS Headquarters at St. Elizabeths West Campus Final Environmental Impact Statement Volume II. These Alternatives are denoted as Alternatives I-1, I-2, I-3, and I-4 in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. These alternatives all include the modifications to the

Malcolm X Avenue/Interstate 295 Interchange and the construction of an access road connecting the Interchange with Firth Sterling Avenue. The Alternatives differ in the height of the retaining walls, the construction of a flyover ramp, and additional construction in association with access to Malcolm X Avenue. In a situation where all of the build alternatives use the same Section 4(f) properties, the alternative which has the least overall impact to Section 4(f) resources must be selected unless it is not feasible and prudent. Table 1 below, indicates the Section 4(f) land areas associated with each alternative.

All four alternatives have essentially the same physical impact to the Section 4(f) properties, within a few acres. Alternatives I-3 and I-4 use more land from the Shepherd Parkway than Alternatives I-1 and I-2 and would eliminate access to South Capitol Street from Malcolm X Avenue, changing traffic patterns for local residents. In addition, Alternative I-4 would use the most land from Shepherd Parkway, because the design of the interchange would force the St. Elizabeths West Campus access road to the east causing it to take more land area from Shepherd Parkway.

Alternative I-1 takes the least amount of acreage from the Section 4(f) resources. However, Alternative I-1 includes the construction of a flyover ramp that would affect views of the topographic bowl from I-295, from the western shore of the Anacostia River and from the remaining portion of the Shepherd Parkway. While Alternative I-2 uses slightly more land from the Section 4(f) property than Alternative I-1, it does not include the fly-over and therefore has less visual impacts on the topographic bowl and the Shepherd Parkway. Therefore, Alternative I-2 is the preferred alternative. In addition, based on a thorough review of the alternatives as discussed in the FEIS, Alternative I-2 would have the least harm to the Section 4(f) resources after considering mitigation and is a prudent and feasible alternative. Alternative I-2 is discussed in more detail below.

Table 1. Acres Impacted in Shepherd Parkway and St. Elizabeths West Campus from the Malcolm X Avenue/I-295 Interchange and the Proposed Access Road

Alternative	Shepherd Parkway			St. Elizabeths West Campus			Total Area of Disturbance (FHWA Action)		
	Grading Impacts (ac)	Permanent Impacts (ac)	Total	Grading Impacts (ac)	Permanent Impacts (ac)	Total	Grading Impacts (ac)	Permanent Impacts (ac)	Total
I-1	4.4	3.6	8.0	1.3	3.8	5.1	5.7	7.4	13.1
I-2	6.0	4.4	10.4	1.3	3.8	5.1	7.3	8.2	15.5
I-3	8.0	4.3	12.3	1.3	3.8	5.1	9.3	8.1	17.4
I-4	8.2	4.5	12.7	1.3	3.8	5.1	9.5	8.3	17.8

3.d. GSA Preferred Alternative I-2

The proposed use of 4(f) properties by Alternative I-2, the identified preferred alternative, would result from the combination of improvements to the I-295/Malcolm X Avenue Interchange as well as the construction of a new road from Firth Sterling Avenue to Malcolm X Avenue that would be used to access the St. Elizabeths West Campus (the access road). Since the interchange of I-295 and Malcolm X Avenue is bordered on three sides by National Park Service land, known as Shepherd Parkway and determined to be a 4(f) property, there is no possible alternative to improve the interchange without taking land from a Section 4(f) resource. Additionally, since the access road and the interchange act as an integrated element to provide the necessary direct access to the St. Elizabeths West Campus, there is no possible alternative that does not include the taking of land from St. Elizabeths West Campus, also determined to be a 4(f) property.

The access road has been studied as a three-lane, two-way road that connects from Firth Sterling Avenue, SE to Malcolm X Avenue (see Figures 7 and 8). The center lane would be reversible to accommodate inbound and outbound peak directional traffic flow. Additional lanes will be provided at the access road intersection with Malcolm X for turn lanes and at the new entrance gate for turn lanes and vehicle queuing for security processing. It should be noted that under GSA's Campus Redevelopment Alternatives 4 and 5, it may be feasible to reduce the access road to two lanes, thereby reducing impacts associated with the roadway. If the access road is reduced to two vehicle travel lanes then a bicycle-lane and sidewalk could be accommodated from Firth Sterling Avenue into the campus within the same currently proposed cross section. The bicycle-lane and sidewalk would help provide improved access from the west campus to the Anacostia Metrorail Station, the Naval Support Facility Anacostia (the Naval Annex), and the Barry Farm Redevelopment. The bicycle-lane and sidewalk would end at the campus limits and would therefore, through the lane reduction from three to two, still allow for reduced impacts through Shepherd Parkway to Malcolm X Avenue. GSA would continue to study reductions to the footprint of the roadway and the provision of a bicycle-lane and sidewalk during final design.

The intersection of Firth Sterling Avenue with Stevens and Barry Roads, located a block north of St. Elizabeths West Campus, would be re-configured to allow a functional and safe tie-in of a new access road to the West Campus. The access road is planned as a three-lane, two-way road that enters the northwest perimeter of St. Elizabeths West Campus from Firth Sterling Avenue, S.E. (See above). A streetcar track project will be under construction shortly, and the design maintains the existing conditions along Firth Sterling Avenue and the street car alignment, but would realign the Frontage Road and Stevens Road legs of the intersection. A slip ramp would be constructed for movements from northbound Firth Sterling Avenue to the West Campus via the new access road. Barry Road would be a one-way road heading northbound.

After crossing the northwest perimeter of St. Elizabeths West Campus, the access road would run parallel to Interstate 295 (I-295), before tying into a four-lane, two-way gated entrance to the south of the West Campus Cemetery. Retaining walls would border the access road on both sides. The height of the east retaining wall would vary with a maximum height of 11 feet. The west retaining wall height will vary with a maximum of 9 feet.



Figure 7. Alternative I-2

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Figure 8. Alternative I-2, Drainage and Stormwater Management

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South of the new gated entrance, the access road would continue to parallel I-295 and cross onto Shepherd Parkway. Approximately 750 feet north of Malcolm X Avenue, the road would turn east to intersect with Malcolm X Avenue. Between the new gated entrance and Malcolm X Avenue, the east and west retaining walls will vary in height with a maximum of 13 feet. South of the Malcolm X Avenue intersection, the east retaining wall will vary in height with a maximum height of 40 feet, and the west retaining wall will vary in height with a maximum of 33 feet.

The cloverleaf loop that connects northbound I-295 to westbound Malcolm X Avenue would be closed. A new off-ramp would provide access to Malcolm X Avenue from northbound I-295. This ramp would begin approximately 2,000 feet south of Malcolm X Avenue, remaining close to the interstate before turning east approximately 750 feet south of Malcolm X Avenue. Alternative I-2 would include an on-ramp from westbound Malcolm X Avenue to I-295 north. Alternative I-2 would require the closing of the existing northbound South Capitol Street offramp to Malcolm X Avenue and the partial closing of the northbound South Capitol Street onramp from Malcolm X Avenue, allowing for only right turns from westbound Malcolm X Avenue. These ramp closures would allow for the critical elimination of the existing traffic signal at Malcolm X Avenue and the northbound South Capitol Street ramps.

4. Impacts to Section 4(f) Resources

This section presents the planning to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) resources identified in Section 3. This assessment includes determination of the Section 4(f) use, description of any shifts or design modifications that were made to avoid and/or minimize Section 4(f) use, and measures to mitigate harm to the Section 4(f) properties.

4.1. Shepherd Parkway

A portion of the Shepherd Parkway would be utilized for improvements to the I-295/Malcolm X Avenue Interchange and the construction of a new access road between Firth Sterling Avenue and Malcolm X Avenue. The Shepherd Parkway qualifies for Section 4(f) protection as both a park and a historic site. There would be a direct take of land from the Shepherd Parkway under the proposed use for the reconstruction of the I-295/Malcolm X Avenue Interchange, and the new access road between Firth Sterling Avenue and Malcolm X Avenue.

The proposed improvements would require the direct use of forested parkland on its western border near the St. Elizabeths West Campus and near Malcolm X Avenue for the reconstruction of the northbound off-ramp from I-295 to Malcolm X Avenue, as well as the northbound on-ramp and access road. In addition, the proposed use would require some additional land to construct the northbound on ramps. The proposed use would require additional property for the access road within Shepherd Parkway. A total of 4.4 acres of land from this 4(f) property will be utilized for permanent transportation improvements and a total of 6.0 acres are needed for temporary construction and drainage improvements.

The parkland impacted by the alternatives considered in detail is not currently accessible to the public and does not contain recreational facilities. A small area of Shepherd Parkway adjacent to Congress Heights contains a few benches and a horseshoe pit; however this area would not be affected by the proposed transportation improvements. According to the NPS, the area that would be impacted by the proposed alternatives contains important natural features, including mature native hardwood forest, geologic and aquatic resources, and provides important habitat for indigenous flora and fauna. Construction of the interchange improvements would impact these features. Construction of the interchange ramps would not prevent the development of the planned Fort Circle Trail as adequate land would remain for the construction of the trail. The interchange improvements would have no impact on other portions of the Fort Circle Parks. The improvements would not physically alter other portions of the parks nor would the improvements be visible from or have auditory impacts on the other separate parcels of land that collectively make up Shepherd Parkway. Shepherd Parkway contains no historic structures, therefore no demolition would occur. Implementation of Alternative I-2 will result in the substantial narrowing of a section of the Shepherd Parkway property currently located immediately north the Interstate 295/Malcolm X Avenue interchange, between 2nd Street, SE and I-295. This parkway land area is currently over 400 feet wide and would be narrowed to approximately 100 feet wide for a distance of 1000 feet. The natural forested area within the narrowed land area will be maintained. Its ability to provide an urban wildlife corridor, a natural wooded buffer between the Congress Heights community and I-295 and protection of the upper elevations of the topographic bowl, while diminished, will still be provided.

The NPS has assessed the areas as having a high potential for unrecorded Civil War defensive works, magazines, and signal stations, and prehistoric Native American sites. Proposed construction could potentially impact as yet unidentified archeological resources within the direct take areas of the Shepherd Parkway. Therefore, a Programmatic Agreement is under development to establish an inclusive process to prepare and perform more detailed surveys and direct archeological investigations of the area of potential effect, analysis of any discovered / encountered archeological resources, and coordination procedures to determine whether the sites/resources warrant preservation in place or data recovery.

Although there would be impacts through the direct and permanent use of 4.4 acres and temporary use of 6.0 acres of Shepherd Parkway, the property would still have 195.1 acres of forested land available that serve the same functions as the existing property. The total area of Shepherd Parkway would be reduced by 2.1% from 205.5 acres to 201.1 acres due to the proposed permanent taking. There would be no significant impact to current or planned recreational facilities of this property. Mitigation proposals under discussion include compensating the National Park Service with adjacent/contiguous, similarly vegetated natural lands. A land transfer and the rate of compensation have yet to be resolved.

4.2. St. Elizabeths West Campus

The St. Elizabeths West Campus would be impacted by the proposed transportation improvements subject to the Section 4(f) requirements, specifically construction of the a new access road between Firth Sterling Avenue and Malcolm X Avenue. St. Elizabeths Hospital, both East and West Campuses, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and has also been designated by the Secretary of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark. These listings qualify the St. Elizabeths West Campus as a 4(f) property.

A sliver of undeveloped land, consisting of approximately 3.8 acres, along the west edge of the West Campus paralleling I-295 would be directly converted from undeveloped land to transportation use. The 3.8 acres of permanent taking of NHL lands is 1.1% of the approximately 349 acre East and West Campus NHL property. The new access road would run in a north-south direction, parallel and adjacent to Interstate 295, keeping it on the extreme western part of the St. Elizabeths West Campus (see Figures 7 and 8). No contributing buildings would be demolished for construction of the interchange improvements, or for construction of the access road from Firth Sterling Avenue and Malcolm X Avenue.

Construction of the access road and interchange improvement would impact the landscape of St. Elizabeths West Campus, both physically and visually. The access road would eliminate a portion of the hospital's former agricultural lands. The access road and related construction would change a small area of the land along the west border from wooded land to roadway. This construction would also have effects on the views and setting of the West Campus Cemetery. Other visual effects on the site would stem mainly from the east retaining walls. An archeological survey of St. Elizabeths Hospital West Campus was conducted by GSA. A portion of a foundation wall potentially associated with the St. Elizabeths Hospital gardener's house that

minimally dates from the 1850s through 1900, is present in the vicinity of the access road. Should this be directly impacted by these planned transportation improvements, investigations would be conducted to determine whether this resource is eligible for listing in the NRHP, and warrants preservation in place. This undertaking's Programmatic Agreement, currently under development will provide a process and procedure to direct archeological investigations of the area of potential effect, analysis of any discovered archeological resources, and coordination procedures to determine whether the sites/resources warrant preservation in place or data recovery.

Although there would be impacts through the direct and permanent use of 3.8 acres of forested area and 1.3 acres for grading, the property would still have forested land available that serves the same functions as the existing property. The direct impact to the 3.8 acres to be converted from natural land use to transportation use is partially minimized because the narrow strip of land to be utilized for the access road in the NHL is currently impacted and influenced by the immediately adjacent, existing, high speed and high volume Interstate 295 highway. The interstate's influence/impact (noise, air, visual) over and beyond the strip of Section 4(f) NHL land that is to be converted to transportation use by this preferred alternative, means that the access road is being proposed in one of the least desirable and most adversely impacted (from existing conditions) areas of the NHL site.

5. Design Measures to Mitigate/Minimize Harm

After initial alternatives were drawn on mapping with typical cut and fill slopes, the design team began to look at ways to minimize the overall footprint and taking/conversion of Section 4(f) property. One minimization approach was to shift the northbound off ramp and the northbound on ramps to hug them as tight as possible to existing I-295. Another minimization effort was to replace the cut and fill slopes with retaining walls. This option, while reducing the proposed improvement's footprint creates visual barriers between 8 and 15 feet tall. The NPS expressed some concern over this visual intrusion. A grading plan was developed to integrate the roadway improvements more closely with the natural land forms and terrain. This grading option would require approximately 5.6 more acres from the 4(f) property than an option utilizing more retaining walls. All of these alternatives with the various minimization options meet the needs of the project while proposing reasonable measures to minimize the impacts to the Section 4(f) property.

Given the location of the St. Elizabeths West Campus to the I-295/ Malcolm X Avenue Interchange, and the immediately adjacent Shepherd Parkway Section 4(f) property any expansion of the existing interchange will result in some conversion or take of the subject 4(f) property. Potential mitigation measures for the loss of parkland in the Shepherd Parkway include:

- a) NPS requested that designs consider the use of retaining walls to minimize the amount of parkland used for the interchange improvements; however, the NPS also objected to the visual impacts to the DC topographic bowl that would occur with the high retaining walls that would be needed for the interchange modification. The final design of the road improvements including the retaining walls and other supporting infrastructure will be designed to minimize direct taking. The GSA and FHWA will work with and include the National Park Service in the development and design process to insure appropriate consideration and impact of the transportation improvements upon the adjacent Shepherd Parkway property.
- b) Transfer of control, from GSA to NPS, of land on the St. Elizabeths West Campus that is outside of the proposed use impact area as a mitigation for the use; including:
 - i. Transfer of land or jurisdiction to be set aside as a Bald Eagle Management Area; and
 - ii. Transfer of land or jurisdiction to the NPS of the historic cemetery.
 - iii. Consideration to transfer land or jurisdiction of additional wooded land on the West Campus to the NPS, as mitigation/compensation for the conversion or taking of Shepherd Parkway property for the transportation improvements.


6. Consultation and Coordination with the Property Administrator

Coordination has been ongoing with the NPS with regard to Shepherd Parkway and with GSA with regard to the West Campus. Meetings were held between the FHWA and the NPS and GSA in October 2006 and February 2007, as well as several meetings in 2008, to discuss proposed modifications to the Malcolm X Avenue/I-295 interchange and the potential use/impact upon the Shepherd Parkway. Coordination with the DC Historic Preservation Office and numerous other consulting parties for compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act is also ongoing.


7. Conclusion

Based upon the above considerations, there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the location of the Interchange modification and the access road across a portion of the Shepherd Parkway and the St. Elizabeths West Campus (Section 4(f) properties). It is required that the design and construction shall include all possible planning to minimize harm to the 4(f) resources resulting from such use. It should be noted that there is no determination at this time which Federal entity will actually administer or fund the design and construction of the access road. Therefore, the FHWA authorizes use of these Section 4(f) properties for the transportation purposes discussed above contingent on the review and approval by the FHWA of the design and related contract provisions so that the actions described above to minimize harm to the 4(f) properties, and additional actions identified through continuing coordination with the National Park Service as the administrator of the Shepherd Parkway property and GSA as the administrator of the West Campus, can be effectively implemented.


Recommended for Approval:


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Date

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency:


Julia L. Perry, Legal Counsel, FHWA 12/8/08
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